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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

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7 April 1975

Lt. Gen. Samuel V. Wilson, USA
Deputy to the DCI for the
Intelligence Community
Intelligence Community Staff
Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Sam:

As one privileged to be on the scene in OSR at the time, I was fascinated by the ICS review of the good analytical work done in putting the "nuclear war" story together--a story which clearly benefited from some of the finest collection and richest data the Intelligence Community has ever been lucky enough to receive and put together. (NSA and DDO deserve oceans of credit.)

I thought I might be able to add a bit of spice to the IC review. As a bureaucratic process, this particular study might serve as a good model for the future.

My first introduction to the topic came as I recall in the late Fall of 1973, shortly after I entered as OSR's director. I was shown a memo prepared by OSR analysts late one afternoon with an urgent request that I clear it for passage to someone in OSD who was said to be interested in any views we might have on the general subject.

I was not then (nor am I now) an expert on Communist military affairs and doctrine but I could sense major news when I saw it and I knew this was such a case.

We passed the memo to OSD but only (as I recall) as an informal draft and after calling the subject and our views to the attention of DDI, Ed Proctor.

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25X1 I then instructed that we stand down on efforts to break into print on the subject forthwith. We circulated drafts to various quarters-- [redacted] as IC Chief, the top elements in DIA, NSA, NIO's and others. We then called a series of "county-fair" meetings, some at Langley and some in the Pentagon to develop dialogue, cross-talk and critiques.

Meanwhile, as your review points out, the NSA and DDO data and analysis of it continued to build and sharpen.

The result was that the town began to understand the issues and implications well in advance of OSR's eventual publication of its thesis. At one point, the thesis was briefed to Dr. Kissinger and other senior advisers at an MBFR Verification Panel meeting in early 1974, several months prior to the report's issuance. At another point--in late March 1974--the Director instructed us to brief NATO Commander Goodpaster and it was done here in Washington.

Let me make it clear that the process did not involve OSR's holding to a single draft or formulation on the subject throughout. Just as the data improved, our own understanding improved and the final presentation had a clarity it never would have had without the strengthening effect of the inter-agency dialogue.

There is one more lesson in it. The tendency of most production offices always of course is to be the first on the streets with a report. There are times when the "bombshell" can be counter-productive. A new thesis of major import, if not well understood by many at its outset, will simply divide an audience into proponents and opponents. The process I have tried here to describe succeeded in avoiding such an effect; we obtained the town's receptivity and understanding.

One last thing. . . I was so impressed by the quality and innovation involved in OSR's analysis work that we arranged special merit awards for four of its authors.

Faithfully yours,

[redacted]

E. H. Knoche

cc: DCI
DDI
D/OSR

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